

Meet the Inspector



Kristina checks the temperature of the ribs to make certain they're not in the danger zone.

Kristina Keating is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist and is credentialed through the National Environmental Health Association. She currently serves as the Food Program Coordinator for Panhandle Health District 1. The program inspects and licenses roughly 1,300 food facilities per year. Each facility receives at least one inspection annually, which includes education on basic food safety, sanitation and accountability to good food handling practices. Kristina is one of the 11 inspectors for northern Idaho.

The inspection focuses on five main risk factors.

1. The inspector checks the amount of time food has been sitting out and at what temperature. Foods such as meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, ground meats, cooked starches, dairy products, soy products and cooked vegetables need to stay out of the Danger Zone. Foods that are kept between 41° to 135° Fahrenheit are in the Danger Zone, and bacteria can grow very quickly in this stage.
2. Good personal hygiene is a must when it comes to handling food. Those who handle food are expected to wash their hands before beginning work and working with food, after going to the restroom, touching face and hair, eating or smoking and handling dirty dishes, dirty work stations and chemical or garbage. They should also wash after handling raw meats. Germs spread quickly!
3. All equipment such as forks, knives, spoons, cutting boards and counter tops must be cleaned by washing with soap and warm water, rinsing with clear warm water, sanitizing, and then allowing the equipment to air dry. Food workers must be careful and not allow any raw meats to come in contact with other foods and they must store raw meat below vegetables or other foods in the refrigerator.
4. Food workers must make sure foods are cooked to the proper temperature, depending on the type of food, because under-cooked foods increase the risk of food-borne illness.
5. Food that is served to consumers must come from a safe source. Restaurants cannot serve home-canned food, wild game meat or sport caught fish.

Why should you care about the Food Program? Roughly 50% of the money spent on food in our country is spent in restaurants. Annually in the United States, 48 million cases of food-borne illness are reported along with 3,000 food-borne illness-related deaths. Inspections are an excellent way to provide education to managers and staff at restaurant facilities. Inspections ensure safe food handling practices to protect the health of consumers.